WESTMINSTER COURT OF SEWERS.

A SPECIAL court was held on Friday, the 26th ult., Capt. G. Bague, R.N., in the chair.

Sanitary Improvement of Hammersmith and Fulham.—Mr. Bathurst brought before the court the motion of which he had given notice, relative to the memorial presented at the last court from the parishes of Hammersmith and Fulham, praying for sanitary improvement, and moved that the application of the Board of Guardians of the Hammersmith and Fulham Union to this court be referred to the surveyor.

Mr. Gunter having borne testimony to the necessity of the measure, the question was put and unanimously adopted.

Strutton Ground, Westminster.—The clerk reported, that in consequence of statements received, that in many cases the drainage of Strutton Gound, Westminster, was passing through apartments which were inhabited, notices had been served on the owners of the property, calling upon them to drain their houses into the sewer, under the authority of the new Act.

Deputation from the Marylebone Vestry.—Three gentlemen attended the court as a deputation from the vestry of Marylebone, to ask permission of the court for the removal of certain gulley-holes in Portland Mews, by which a great improvement might be effected. The surveyor said he had examined the place, and found that several of the gulley-holes complained of were surreptitious, and not laid in under the authority of this court. Mr. T. L. Donaldson hoped, with this explanation, the matter would be referred back to the committee from which these gentlemen attended. As they were, however, present, he wished shortly to refer to the report issued a fortnight since by the Marylebone vestry. (The commissioner then read the passage, which stated that this court had authorised the large number of gulley-holes, and stated that the court had done their utmost to prevent the large number of gulley-holes, but that the parish surveyors insisted upon their being put down.) He wished also to call their attention to another subject, to show how little the vestry understood the authority of this court. He then read the following passage from the report in reference to the formation of cesspools:—"The evils are not confined to the absence of sufficient drainage provided by the commissioners themselves, but have increased by the absolute refusal of the commissioners to permit others to carry out those needful improvements which their culpable negligence has omitted. Every person who has at all considered the subject must be aware, that the formation of cesspools underneath and contiguous to inhabited houses is a fearful source of sickness and disease, and yet the formation of these noxious depositories of filth has been for a long series of years forced upon the public by the absurd practice, on the part of the Sewers Commissioners, of preventing any drain from a closet being laid into a sewer; of late, however, and since the evil has caused a frightful accumulation, the commissioners themselves are loud in their condemnation of cesspools." In reference to this, the truth was, that for half a century such a practice had not existed in this court, but, on the contrary, they were anxious and had done all in their power to compel parties to drain their houses into the public sewers.

The Chairman said there could be no doubt the report was a tissue of misrepresentations.

The question was referred back to the committee.

The deputation said they should not fail to represent all these facts to the vestry.

The Action against Mrs. Webb.—The solicitor reported, that this morning he had ascertained that a declaration had been filed in the Palace-court by Mr. Farlar (on the part of Mr. Gigner) against Mrs. Webb, charging her with trespass in entering his sewer. After a conversation it was resolved, "That the solicitor, having laid before the court a copy of a declaration in the case of 'Gigner v. Webb,' resolved, that the solicitors of this court do cause a plea to be made that the trespass complained of was done by and under the authority of this court, or such plea as counsel shall advise. Resolved also, that if it can be done, the cause be removed into the Court of Queen's Bench, and that the address of the plaintiff be obtained."

The Want of Drainage near Buckingham-palace.—The clerk said he had received a communication from the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, which was as follows:—

"Office of Woods and Forests,
"Nov. 23, 1847.

"On the part of her Majesty's Commissioners of Woods and Forests, I transmit to you a copy of a letter which they have received from Mr. Portwine, the honorary secretary to the St. Margaret's Association, representing the defective state of the sewerage of certain streets in the vicinity of Buckingham-palace, the houses in which streets are the property of the Crown.

"The subject of the want of drainage in these streets was under the attention of this board towards the close of the year 1843, and an extract from a report of Mr. Hogg, the clerk of the works at Buckingham-palace, was transmitted to you to be laid before the Court of Sewers for Westminster, with a request of this board to be made acquainted with the terms upon which the court would undertake the works necessary to place the locality in a proper state of drainage. In reply to that communication the board received a letter dated January 10, 1844, stating that the Court of Sewers had caused a plan and specifications to be prepared by their surveyors, and transmitted with your letter three unopened tenders for the performance of the work. (The document then stated the amount of the estimates.) From Mr. Portwine's letter, however, it appears very necessary that some measures should be adopted for procuring a proper sewerage for the property in question; and as the board understand that by a recent Act of Parliament, greater powers as to the construction of sewers in places destitute of that accommodation are given to the Court of Sewers of Westminster, I have to request that you will again bring the subject under their consideration, with a view to their constructing such a sewer as shall be necessary for the locality above mentioned.

"I have to observe, that as the houses in the streets referred to by Mr. Portwine are for the most part subject to long leases, it appears to the board reasonable that the lessees and occupiers, who will derive the chief benefit from the sewer, should be at some portion of the expense thereof, instead of having it all fall on the Crown as the freeholder. Whether or not the Court of Sewers have any power of apportioning it, the Board are not aware; but if not, they can perhaps point out a method of compelling lessees and occupiers to defray a share of the cost, which the Board apprehended there would be some difficulty in effecting.

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
"T. MILNE."

Accompanying the letter was a long memorial from the inhabitants of Catherine-street, Palace-street, &c., Pimlico, complaining that typhus fever raged in that locality from the want of drainage, and that this nuisance existed within 200 yards of Buckingham-palace.

As the matter has been for some time under consideration, the letter and memorial were referred to the surveyor, and an acknowledgment of them ordered to be sent to the Commissioners of Woods and Forests.

The Expiring Commission.—Mr. Hertslet said, in obedience to the order of the last court, he had written to the Lord Chancellor to ask when it would suit his lordship's convenience to receive a deputation from this court on the subject of the expiring commission, but that he had received no answer whatever to his communication. Mr. Le Breton was anxious to know, if the commission expired, into whose hands the property would pass? Mr. Broughton said, that such an anomalous position as the commission being allowed to expire he could scarcely believe would take place, short as was the time of its duration. If any property of the commission was stolen, the Commissioners of Sewers at present were the prosecutors, but no such persons could be charged when the commission became extinct, as there would then be no Commissioners of Sewers, and it might become a question, whether parties would even pay the sewer rates. It certainly would be a most remarkable feature if the commission was allowed to expire without a substitute being provided. They should, however, be prepared, and, if they were to become defunct, let them, like Cæsar, wrap their cloaks around them, and die with dignity. The chairman said, although the business of the court, after the commission was expired, would fall on the county magistrates, still he felt assured that the body of the magistracy would not attend to execute the duties of the commission unless they received the appointment from the Lord Chancellor. It was suggested, that the illness of the Lord Chancellor might account for no answer being received.

GOVERNMENT SCHOOL OF DESIGN.—The new appointments at the school, now all complete, are,—Mr. William Dyce, A.R.A., master of the class of ornament; Mr. Richard Redgrave, A.R.A., master of flower-drawing and occasional lecturer; Mr. Henry Townsend, master of class of form; Mr. J. C. Horsley, master of class of colour; Mr. C. J. Richardson, master of geometrical, architectural, or perspective drawing; Mr. Burchett and Mr. Denby, assistant masters. The first lecture is to be given this (Friday) evening, at eight o'clock, by Mr. Poynter, on the arabesques of the Vatican.

New Books.

Aerial Navigation. By DÆDALUS BRITANNICUS. Gilbert, Paternoster-row, 1847.

THE joker who proposed to traverse the sky by means of a congreve rocket, and to descend with the aid of his umbrella, enunciated the real circumstances under which aerial navigation may be hoped for. To ascend by being lighter than the air, is to be less powerful than the air, and admits of no strife against it. A steam-engine *may*, one of these days, take us with certainty through the clouds to a given point, but a bag of hydrogen gas *alone* never will.

The author of the pamphlet named at the head of this notice, seems to have a clear idea of this; but whether or not the means he points out are calculated to effect the desired end, is quite another matter. He proposes to obtain power equal to that of eighty horses, acting on wing-shaped adjuncts to a balloon, by the atmospheric pressure on a vacuum formed by ignition of gases. We hope, for the sake of his wife and family, if "Dædalus Britannicus" have them, that no good-natured people will encourage him in the construction of the machine shadowed forth in the pamphlet before us.

Correspondence.

THE DISGRACEFUL STATE OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

SIR,—Having had of late sufficient time for examining the architectural beauties of this magnificent edifice, I could not help (as is the case with many other visitors) being struck with the disgraceful and unclean appearance of the small chapels, and particularly that of Henry the Seventh. The niggardly practice of exacting the paltry sum of sixpence for their exhibition has been so often ridiculed and exposed, that I deem it unnecessary to trouble you with any remarks upon that subject. The public, at least, may expect to find the objects of exhibition as clean as their mutilated condition will allow; but even this is not the case, for many monuments are so completely covered with dust as to render their identity a difficult matter. The magnificent effigy of William de Vallance, in the chapel of St. Edmund, formed of wood and covered with a species of copper-gilt and enamel, is, although one of the finest objects in the church, hardly ever noticed by the casual visitor; but, were the filth removed, its beauties would at once attract the wonder and attention of every passer-by. This is not the only instance. The tombs of the kings in the Chapel of the Confessor are in as filthy a state; as is also the magnificent wall-work in Henry the Seventh's Chapel. I cannot help observing how much better the modern monuments contained in the nave and transepts are preserved, in comparison with those before alluded to. Men have of late been employed in cleaning those huge memorials which, so far from decorating that noble edifice, only disfigure it; whereas, its ancient architectural beauties are allowed to moulder away unnoticed and uncared for. The present dean and chapter, in some of the late alterations, have shewn good taste and selection (if we except the scheme for extending the choir into the transepts); and I cannot conceive the reason why they have suffered so important a part as the whole east end of the church, to remain in its present dilapidated and unclean state, this being without doubt the most attractive portion of the abbey. May I be allowed, then, to suggest that that part should be cleaned and restored to its pristine beauty forthwith?

I am, Sir, &c.,
E. DAVIS.

NAMES OF STREETS.

SIR,—From the nature of your periodical, I infer that any suggestion tending to an improvement either in our streets or buildings is acceptable to you, therefore I submit to you the following alteration in placing the names of streets.

That which is to be *read* ought to be as near the level of the eye as possible, according to the standard of general height. This arrangement cannot be effected on the walls of buildings, because of the interruption of windows, &c. I therefore propose that the names be removed from that locality, and that they be

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